

Central MRS Meeting Notes
November 27, 2007
Kimbrall Lutheran Church - Kannapolis

Counties Present: Alamance, Cabarrus, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Randolph, Rockingham, Union

Introductions

News from Raleigh

Training Issues – Ginger Caldwell

Coming Soon – SOC

Tool Time – Ecomaps, Genograms, Scaling

News from Raleigh

- Charisse Johnson has been named as the new Section Chief – will start Dec 3rd. Was formerly at the Division as head of the Community Based Programs team and left to go to Wayne Co DSS.
- Getting started working on the Work First and MRS Institute. Both will be at the Koury Center in Greensboro. WF is in late April, MRS is in August.
- Action for Children published its annual report card.
- Crystal Williams sent Holly some info on data regarding referrals to abuser treatment programs. 499 referrals to abuser treatment programs by DSS. 356 were accepted which means 143 were not accepted. Not sure why, but interesting to look at. 57 referring counties (57 counties that have abuser treatment programs. 12 of those counties made no referrals in an year. 35 counties said that had no access to an abuser treatment program, and 16 said that they had access but it was in a neighboring county.)
- MRS is now available in DW.

Training Issues – Ginger talked about various kinds of training, and training needs.

Talked about the 3 tier training system.

Every six months all intro classes are offered at least once in each of the centers.

Are counties able to get their new workers the training that they need in the first year?

- No, this is hard. Counties do not have a budget to send people away for training so they can only go to the training site closest to them, they will send in registrations the day the class opens and it will get full so all their workers can't go. With a limit of 20 people in a class they can't get in all their workers in to complete the ideal training within their first year.
- Legal/medical is hard to get into.
 - Because of the high turnover, it is hard to manage. Counties would like the state to try and look at offering this more since it is so critical for new workers and there were so many new workers all the time.
- On-line classes. One county has tried some of the on-line classes and their staff liked it.

- Trying to put some dimensions of more classes on-line. Trend to go to blended trainings where there is some on-line and some face-to-face training. As of now Child Development is the only one all on-line, and there are no immediate plans to make any other ones totally on-line.
- Pre-Service and Supervisor Transfer of Learning course are partially on-line.
- Computer Equipment needed for on-line training – depends on which kind of training you are doing. Two types of on-line training
 - Self Paced – work at your own pace, you just need access to the Internet.
 - Live on line – have a microphone and a headset and you are able to talk to other participants in the class. You will need a headset (about \$15)
- Ginger has developed a handout talking about how to avoid distractions and stay on track with on-line training. Some advance planning will help participants get the most out of it.
- One suggestion was that if there are several people from the same county that are taking the training they go into a room together and so they were on-line but also taking it together.
- Ncswlearn.org – this is the portal to access for any on-line classes. Currently you can register without having a log-in, but they encourage you to register via this system. Ginger has a handout which is an overview of ncswlearn. Also are handouts that walk you through setting up an account in ncswlearn.
 - One of the things that it does is keep track of your training history and includes classes that you took before this system was up. Supervisors can access their staff's training history as well.
 - The course list will come out on line well before the paper copy comes out and everyone can access the web, but there will be a limited number of paper copies of the training calendar sent out.
 - Can search for training without knowing the name of the class. Under “find a training” can just type in ‘domestic violence’ and it will give you all the classes related to domestic violence.
- If it is necessary to cancel, please do so as soon as possible so that someone on the waiting list can take your place.
- How do they decide who gets to attend? It depends on when your registration comes in and also what they call “fair access” – if the facility only holds 20 people and one county wants to send 15 and there are multiple other counties want to attend he may only allow some of the large county's staff attend. He also takes geography into account and some people may be denied if there is another one close to them in the near future.
- Some people have issues with getting their confirmations. These are not send out until the last day so if you register early it may seem like a long time. Some people are having the confirmation email sent to their spam folder – this is an issue with the county spam filter that your IT people will have to look at to whitelist Clarence's email. You can also check on the ncswlearn website for registration confirmation.
- Seems to be a gap between training and policy. Frequently have workers come back from training saying that they were told “X” at training, and it is not in policy. There are several issues here:

- The Division is working on improving communication both with counties and with the trainers.
- If you feel that there is confusion about information that may have been shared at training, please let Staff Development know. If they don't know about it, it can't be resolved. You can call the trainer, or the Staff Development manager if it is a Division manager, if it is a trainer for a contract agency (like AFI) you may need to call Staff Development to find out who the manager of that trainer would be.
- Also remember the 'telephone game' – these are new workers receiving massive amounts of information and may have gotten something jumbled up, or heard something from another participant, not a trainer, and it may not be accurate.
- Sought feedback from the group if anyone has been to the DV class yet as it is new.
 - Very good, very victim friendly and teaches how to not re-victimize the victim.
- There is a prerequisite for the DV class, as with many of the classes. This is because the second level classes build on the knowledge gained in the prerequisite.
- What Training needs are not being met?
 - Conflict Resolution – many new SW are fresh out of college and do not have a lot of life experience in dealing with hostile clients. They may get scared off, or dance around issues with clients and not resolve issues appropriately. They need some tools to learn to deal with this.
 - Adoption forms – know that there is some training, but thing there needs to be something more focused on all the documentation that goes with it.
 - Documentation – there is not necessarily a documentation training, but the Division is looking at standardizing some parts of Documentation, and if that is done, a training might be able to be developed around that.
 - Currently the documentation module is part of the pre-service is on-line so anyone who took the class since it has been on –line can go back and access this module at any time. Interest in looking to see if there is a way to get this available for people that did not take pre-service on-line.
 - Self-Care and Time management – have offered this at the Institute and it has been really popular.
 - Follow up to trainings. Could just be as simple as an email a month or so after the training – you come back from training all pumped up, but then they get caught up in the hectic office environment, and a little reminder would be encouraging to workers.

Other Issues

Counties felt that there needed to be better about communicating policy changes to the counties. Currently there is just a document issued, and no guidance and therefore there are a lot of different interpretations in implementing it on a county level.

- Supervisors Strategic Planning group – trying to figure out how we can better improve supervision because this dealt with all aspects of our program improvement plan. One of the results of this so far has been acknowledgment of the need to be more effective in the way we release policy. For example – issue policy on standard dates, say twice

a month so people know to look for them, include a statement of intent with the policy – why are we issuing this policy, what are we hoping to do with this?, asking each CPR to hold a conference all with all their counties (or a meeting) and address it with all counties at the same time.

Coming Soon – System of Care

The SOC of care grant for the 3 counties is getting ready to end, but we do not want SOC to go away. Several other counties have partnered with the original 3 and have figured out ways to bring SOC into their counties. One of the ways we think we can help with that is to bring SOC into these MRS meetings. The two systems parallel and compliment each other. Any suggestions or concerns about that and how it would affect these meetings?

- Concern with the idea that sometimes when you educate some agencies they feel they become experts and it is not productive to have community agencies try to tell DSS how they are supposed to do their job.
- However, it can also benefit DSS for community agencies more familiar with the process. Also, community agencies need to know their responsibilities when they are involved or made the report. Will help get the idea across that it is about the family, not the different agencies.
- How many people have some form of SOC in place?
 - Some have MH and DSS working well together, now Director of Human Services, not just DSS.
 - Other agencies bringing people together with different levels of success.
 - There are a lot of different meetings that are all going on, and often we are talking about the same families, but different agencies head different meetings, so right now it means a lot of meetings and people can only commit to so much.
- Statewide Collaborative – large group of public and private agencies that deal with the same populations – this group brings together the leaders of these statewide agencies twice a month. Are trying to help counties form their own collaborative groups.
- Will begin by talking about the SOC principles and how similar they are to MRS and what each principle truly means.
- Six principles are similar to MRS:
 - Cultural Competence, Child & Family Partnership. Individualized, Strength Based Care for Families, Interagency Collaboration, Community Based Services and Supports, Accountability to Results.

ToolTime – what are tools that you may use?

May learn about a lot of neat tools in training, but which ones do you really use frequently with families that works well?

- Tools that you learn at training to use with families can be used just as well with staff.
- Genograms – do you use this when you are figuring out who should be at CFTs? Some counties use them internally at staff meetings, etc, to ensure that everyone understands who is a part of this family.
 - Some counties don't draw it out, but they do them more informally.

- When you actually draw it out and use the arrows families can realize how much of a resource someone truly is. Sometimes if the person you are trying to work with is a visual learner, this may “click” with them when just talking about it won’t.
- Scaling – this is offered in supervisor training to use with staff. Some people started to try to use it and then just sort of quit.
 - Mecklenburg used it at the MRS evaluation visit with Duke. They used it internally to make staff think and this prepped them for the focus groups by Duke.
 - Not only have them pick what number they feel they are at, but what does that number mean to them. It is good for sparking discussion because what one person means by a 4, may not be what the other person sees as a 4. Also, what is the plan to move to the next number?
- Often tools that we use and find beneficial tend to go away, think back if there was something that you used before that was helpful and pull it back out and try it again.
- Some counties have people who attend trainings do presentations to the group at the next staff meeting.
- One county assigns new policy to supervisors on a rotating basis, and that supervisor becomes the “expert” on that one and presents it.

Other Questions

- How do you code the CFTs? When do you use 219? For the time you actually spend planning and holding the CFT. (Remember that the CFT is not any time you meet with the family or even the family and other agencies – it is when you are having a meeting with the family and other participants they want to work on the families goals.)
- Question was asked if counties have seen more children come into to Foster Care since MRS?
 - Everyone said FC has gone up, we can’t say for sure that this has anything to do with MRS.
 - Some counties believe that MRS “forces the counties hand” because things were laid out on the table and if families don’t do what they are supposed to then the kids come into care.
 - Also CFTs may be used to prevent a lot of kids coming into care.
 - Other things happening all over the state at the same time as MRS was being rolled out. Meth is big and every time we have a big new drug more children come into custody (happened with coke, heroin, etc.) Structured Decision making tools came out, the overall population is growing, the whole Mental Health situation, etc.

No December Meetings!!

January meetings:

Central: Randolph Co., January 29th

Western: Asheville, January 16th

East: Sampson Co., January 24th

February meetings:

Central: Winston Salem, February 27th

Western: Asheville, February 19th

East: Pitt Co., February 28th